

RIDOC REVIEW

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES AND FRIENDS OF THE DEPARTMENT
Summer 2010



PO Spotlight: *Fernando Comas*



Fernando Comas

Fernando Comas is passionate about what he does. "I **LOVE** my job," he says. "I was quite afraid to work with sex offenders, especially child molesters. But I believe very deeply that when you supervise these people appropriately there is a better chance that they won't re-offend and fewer people will get damaged."

Fernando is a long way from his home of Caborojo, Puerto Rico, where he made very little money doing tax work. Upon the advice of a friend who had recently relocated to the East Coast, he left there at the age of 28 for the South Bronx, N.Y., where he worked at a methadone maintenance clinic. In 1999 he came to Rhode Island and worked for CODAC, taught domestic violence at the Rhode Island Batterers' Intervention Program, and in 2002 became a Probation & Parole Officer with the RIDOC. He is a graduate of the Inter-American

University in Puerto Rico, where he received a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. He started out with a regular case load, then moved to a domestic violence case load in the Woonsocket Office, and next to Kent County where he had a sex offender case load. He credits Christine Imbriglio, Kent County Supervisor, with helping him to "grow up a lot" adding, "There's never a dull moment with Chris." This past April when Greg Williams left his position to take on a regular case load in Wakefield, Fernando took over Greg's job supervising all sex offenders and some murderers on parole in Rhode Island.

On a recent summer afternoon, Fernando could be found in the conference room of the crowded Pinel Building with about 50 sex offenders who were told to be present because they may be subject to the new state law requiring 1st and 2nd degree sex offenders to be on community supervision, either for life or 30 years depending on their sentence length. Because of the new law, Fernando's case load will continue to grow as will the number of offenders he will have on GPS. He patiently and calmly answered the many questions posed by audience members with the goal of having everyone leave with a clear understanding of the somewhat confusing law.

Fernando readily acknowledges that sex offenses are awful crimes that result in the destruction of victims. He says, "It's a horrible tragedy when someone re-offends," but he has been fortunate thus far in that his clients have only had violations and no new crimes.

In February, Fernando received a call from Assistant Director of Rehabilitative Services Roberta Richman letting him know he had been voted the 2010 recipient of the Community Corrections Award. A humble and modest person, Fernando said he was speechless for a few minutes and literally froze. "I never thought this would happen to me in my lifetime," he says of the honor. "I couldn't believe it." "My father is so proud," Says Fernando, who also has two sisters.

Fernando calls himself a very "hands-on" employee and is definitely not one to sit at the desk all day. He goes on home visits with the police, frequently dropping in on clients to make sure they are complying with the conditions of their parole.

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Fernando Comas chats with colleagues Shelley Cortese and Kate Hammond

Ins/Ops Spotlight: *Ron Fallow*



Ron Fallow is a quiet man with a dry sense of humor and a busy schedule. A lot of his work is behind the scenes, but it's critical to the smooth and safe operation of our facilities. Ron joined the Department in May of 2005 as Environmental Health Coordinator. He applied when a friend in state service saw the posting and let him know about it. For many years, he had worked as a Safety Engineer in a local shipyard, a challenging environment, where, according to Ron, "aches and pains and a sense of danger were routine elements of the job." One can see how that position made for a natural segue into Corrections. Prior to that, he had worked in the offshore oil exploration industry as a Drilling Fluid/"Mud" Engineer. Ron refers to that as an "interesting industry many people have learned something

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NEW I.R.I.S. SCANNING TECHNOLOGY IN PLACE



Director A.T. Wall demonstrates the new I.R.I.S. Scanning technology now in use at women's and men's Intake.

When inmate Nayquan Gadson escaped on July 27th, the RIDOC was “very close to implementing Inmate Recognition and Identification System (I.R.I.S.) scanning equipment which detects distinct and unique patterns in each individual’s eyes,” according to Director Wall. “It is the most cutting edge, up-to-date and foolproof technology for identifying individuals,” says Director Wall. Had the equipment been in place, it would have been impossible for Mr. Gadson to pull off his scheme of getting out by using another inmate’s ID and posing as him. The Director has vowed that “because of this technology, there will never be another Nayquan Gadson in this Department.”

Last year, the Department received a grant through U.S. Representative Patrick J. Kennedy’s office to acquire two iris scanners, one for men’s Intake and one for women’s Intake. At the beginning of this year, two officials (Intake’s Deputy Warden Bob Vitale and MIS’s Michelle Lanciaux) visited the Plymouth (Mass.) House of Corrections to observe the iris scanners in use. Rhode Island becomes the first of any of the six unified correctional systems in the country (the others are Hawaii, Alaska, Vermont, Delaware, and Connecticut) to have the system in place.

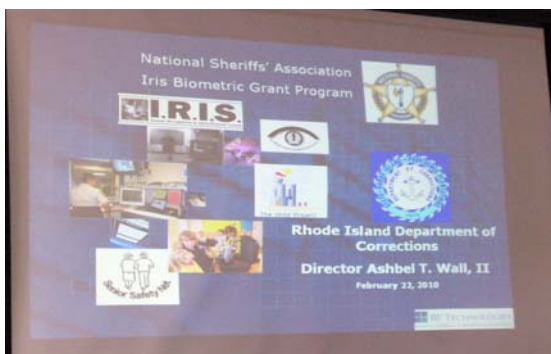
The equipment was developed by the Plymouth-based B12 Technologies, which demonstrated its use at the ACI in February and again this month. Director Wall and other officials “liked what they saw” and “entered into an agreement to install two of them.” However, before the equipment could be installed, some technical issues needed to be resolved. The firm was asked to make some modifications to its software so it would be compatible with the security features of INFACTS, the Department’s inmate tracking system. That work has just recently been completed.

The RIDOC is currently in the first phase of its use, which is to scan all of the offenders at men’s and women’s Intake. Once that has been completed, the equipment will travel to each facility, starting with Maximum Security, so that the irises of existing offenders can be scanned and entered into the system. In addition, the equipment will be used upon release, so the Department can insure that the person leaving is the person who came in.

Because of the grant, the equipment cost the state nothing to acquire, and it will cost only about \$850 a year to maintain. It, along with some revised release procedures, is expected to tighten security so that an escape like the one at the end of July could never happen again. All of our current release protocols will be kept, and this will be an add on.

The iris scanning technology is endorsed by the National Sheriffs’ Association and is used in 47 states’ Sheriffs’ Departments. It has eight times the accuracy of a fingerprint.

What many people don’t realize is that the iris does not change after the age of six months. It remains exactly the same from six months through death. Even twins have



B12 Technologies’ PowerPoint Presentation

distinct irises.

B12 Technologies now has a data base of approximately 80,000 offenders from around the country. In addition to I.R.I.S., its products include S.O.R.I.S. – Sex Offender Registry Identification Sytem; and M.O.R.I.S. – Mobile Offender Recognition and Information System (for those on GPS).

Early this fall, the technology will be demonstrated to the press.



Deputy Warden Bob Vitale introduces the technology at a recent demonstration by B12.



Director A.T. Wall with B12 Technology’s MIS expert.

RIDOC in the Community, the Classroom, and Beyond

Information for this page comes from the "Request to Make a Onetime External Presentation" and "Academic Course Notification" forms required of staff per Policy 1.12 Public Presentations.

ADMINISTRATION

Assistant Director Ellen Evans Alexander spoke about the RIDOC's female offenders and staff at URI in April. **Gina Caruolo, Chief of Program Development**, taught *Women and the Criminal Justice System* at Roger Williams University during the spring semester.

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Chief Inspector Aaron Aldrich spoke about unlawful workplace harassment to the Smithfield Police Department in June. He also received a Letter of Commendation from Director Wall for his role in identifying a robbery suspect whom he recognized on surveillance video footage as a former ACI inmate while he happened to be at the Smithfield PD.

Eamonn Gill, Senior Legal Counsel, spoke about *Department of Corrections: Recession Proof Industry?* at the New England Consortium of State Labor Agencies in New Haven, Conn., in July.

Kathleen Kelly, Senior Legal Counsel, taught *Law of Contracts* at CCRI in the spring.

Director A.T. Wall participated in a symposium at Brown University in May and was a facilitator at New Directors' Training for the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) in St. Louis in June.

Tracey E. Zeckhausen, Chief of Information and Public Relations, has been elected to serve on the board of the Alumna/ae Association of Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Centre, Mass., where she served as Director of Communications for six years and from which she graduated with a M.A. in Theology in 1995.



Lauranne Howard brings many years of experience to her position as Substance Abuse Coordinator



Captain Bruce Tancrrell, a well loved Correctional Officer for 33 years who had achieved the rank of Captain, died on July 25th at the age of 57 after a brief battle with cancer. Those who attended his funeral and calling hours said it was gratifying to see so many from the Department pull together and come to pay their respects. Captain Tancrrell was a volunteer teacher at the Center of Nonviolence and Peace Studies at URI. He leaves a wife, Louise, and four children.

Former Maximum Security C.O. John Lee of Coventry died on September 6th after a long illness. He worked for the Department from 2000 - 2008 and leaves a wife and two children.

Relay for Recovery sponsored by Spectrum Health and BHDDH (formerly MHRH) at the Roger Williams Memorial National Park in early September.

Micheline Lombardi, Probation & Parole Supervisor participated in a panel discussion on Prosecution, Defense & Adult & Juvenile Probation at the Rhode Island Judiciary and Rhode Island Legal/Educational Partnership Summer Institute in July. **Cheryl Lopes, Public Health Education Specialist** has completed the Certified Correctional Health Professional (CCHP) examination. She joins over 2,000 colleagues around the country who have worked hard to achieve this important distinction.

The Rev. Joyce Penfield, Episcopal Chaplain facilitated a *A Prison Sampler*, part of a series titled *Am I My Brother's Keeper?* for the Rhode Island State Council of Churches in April at the Cathedral of St. John in Providence. Participants were invited to come and experience what it is like to do time in prison through brief reality-based role plays involving those who have done time. Each role play was followed by extensive discussion and debriefing.

Parole Unit Supervisor Lynn Gardiner, and Parole Officers Greg Williams and George Lang spoke about Probation & Parole basics at the Municipal Police Academy at CCRI in Lincoln in May.

Seventeen men and women in Class 78 are participating in the nine-week Training Academy. They will graduate on Friday, September 24th, at Rhode Island College's Sapinsley Hall.



INSTITUTIONS & OPERATIONS

Sergio DeSousarosa, Deputy Warden of the Donald Price Medium Security Facility, will teach *Corrections* at Johnson & Wales University during the fall 2010 semester.

Correctional Officer Lieutenant Robert Sayles of the John J. Moran Medium Security Facility attended two Federal Law Enforcement Training Center classes (FLETC) in August in Portland Maine - *Intelligence Awareness for Law Enforcement Executives* and *Anti Terrorism Intelligence Awareness Training Program*.

Correctional Officer Alfred Zannini participated in *Career Day* at Western Hills Middle School in June.

REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

Joann Esposito, State Director, Spectrum and **Laurie Alviti, Spectrum Clinical Supervisor** represented Spectrum Health at the Rhode Island



(Above): Captain Robert Clancy, who has taken on the Deputy Warden position at Moran under Three-Day-Rule, speaks about his long time colleague. (Right): Assistant Director Nancy Bailey presents the Deputy with a hat and (far right): Deputy Kaszyk and his wife, Janice, have relocated to North Carolina.

DEPUTY KASZYK RETIRES RIDOC Career: 1982-2010



(Left): Director Wall with Deputy Kaszyk



Personnel Notes: Comings and Goings

Promotions, Retirements, & Appointments

A warm welcome to the following people who were hired between April 2nd and June 30th, 2010:

LAURANNE HOWARD, **SUBSTANCE ABUSE COORDINATOR**
LINDA HUGO, **ADULT COUNSELOR**

Congratulations to the following persons who received promotions between April 2nd and June 30th, 2010:

STEPHEN ACETO, **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER LIEUTENANT**
GORDON BOUCHARD, **DIRECTOR OF GENERAL NURSING SERVICES**
MICHAEL CALABRO, **SECURITY SPECIALIST**
ROBERT CATLOW, **INSPECTOR**
ANTHONY FEOLE, **ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, FACILITIES & MAINTENANCE**
ANTHONY GRASSINI, **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER LIEUTENANT**
NELSON LEFEBVRE, **DEPUTY WARDEN, HIGH SECURITY**
GARY MOE, **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER LIEUTENANT**
RAYMOND MORISSETTE, **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER LIEUTENANT**
KERRI SKWIRZ, **COUNSELING SERVICES COORDINATOR**
FREDERICK SPECHT, **ADULT COUNSELOR**
JOHN WARD, **INTAKE SERVICES COORDINATOR**

Congratulations and farewell to the following persons who retired, transferred to another state agency, or voluntarily resigned between April 2nd and June 30th, 2010:

RICHARD BEARD, **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER**
JOANNE BIGGIN, **CLERK SECRETARY**
JORGE CHAMORRO, **PROBATION & PAROLE OFFICER**
KEITH FRANSOON, **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER**
CELESTE GRANT, **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER**
LARETO GUGLIETTA, **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER**
GREGORY MCCARTHY, **PRINCIPAL RESEARCH TECHNICIAN**
EDWARD MITSMEIN, **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER LIEUTENANT**
GERARD MOOR, **CORRECTIONAL OFFICER**
ALAN PARADIS, **SENIOR MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN**



Newly promoted C.O. Lieutenant Gary Moe (left) and Deputy Warden Nelson Lefebvre (below) with family members and Corrections Director A.T. Wall.



Newly promoted Correctional Officer Lieutenant Stephen Aceto poses with his wife and daughter.



Longtime employee Jack Ward has been officially named Intake Services Coordinator



VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE HOLDS FIRST EVER VENDOR FAIR



About 50 discharge planners and counselors attended the vendor event

The Vocational Education Task Force was created in December of 2009 and functions as a steering committee to increase communication between units and agencies. The Task Force advises and disseminates information about vocational education opportunities for offenders while incarcerated and post release. On Wednesday, August 18th, the Task Force held the first-ever vendor presentation for staff. Representatives from the following vendors spoke for 20 minutes each to the 50 or so counselors and discharge planners in attendance: Thielsh Welding School; Apeiron Institute; Trades Training Corp.; Ever Blue Energy; Center to Advance Minority

Participation; Amos House; Building Futures, and Empire Beauty School.

"I appreciate the opportunity to work with counselors and discharge planners and look forward to expanding the role of the Education Unit in the reentry process," says Special Education Director/Principal and Chair of the Task Force Ralph Orleck.

"The information presented today was very helpful to our counselors and discharge planners," said Professional Services Coordinator Teresa Foley. "It was obvious by the questions they asked and their attentiveness that they left with helpful tools to share with clients. If this results in more reentering inmates finding work, it will have been well worthwhile."

To date, the Task Force has worked on the creation of a skill set for vocational completers, reviewed vocational assessment tools used to determine what may be appropriate for the inmate population; and addressed gaps in program enrollment procedures and data collection and sharing.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Ralph Orleck, *Special Education Director/Principal, Chair*
Lee Allison, *Education Coordinator*
Will Jackson, *CCRI Coordinator*
Teresa Foley, *Professional Services Coordinator, Transitional Services*
Kenneth Findlay, *Professional Services Coordinator, Institutional Programs*

David Gamba, *General Supervisor, Correctional Industries*
Kerri Skwirz, *Counseling Services Coordinator*
Connie Parks, *Coordinator, Employer Svcs. Unit, RI Department of Labor*
Robin Adams, *RI Adult Education Professional Development Center*
Jesse Capece, *Employment Specialist, OpenDoors*



Ralph Orleck

WHAT'S NEW WITH NEADS?

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NEADS TO BE FEATURED IN TWO TV PILOTS

The *NEADS/Dogs for Deaf and Disabled Americans Prison Pups Partnership* has been singled out by two production houses. Finn Yarborough of Earth House Productions has been visiting Moran to film various aspects of the program for several months. He is following a couple of inmate/pup partnerships from arrival to graduation and has also attained footage of canine graduates and their human clients on the outside. He is hoping that his hour-long piece will be picked up by PBS.



Another production house, Powder House Productions, filmed a segment at Moran for a pilot which they pitched to Animal Planet called *A Dog Changed My Life*. The network apparently loved the pilot so Powder House will be back to film more of the story.

CLIENTS RETURN TO MEET INMATE HANDLERS

Two NEADS clients recently visited the Moran facility

with their pups to thank the inmate handlers and see where the majority of their canine partners' official training took place. Christian Fleming and service dog *Jonesy* were excited to meet inmate handler Chris, perhaps as excited as Chris was to be reunited with his best friend. Christian lost both legs in Afghanistan and *Jonesy* is making his life much easier by assisting him with tasks at home and staying by his side at all times. In addition, Dee Genetti, a paraplegic from Massachusetts, came along to meet those who trained her second service dog, *Mark*.



Parole Officer Fernando Comas explains the new community supervision law to a client.

In addition to being passionate about what he does, Fernando is passionate about the people he does it with. "I am fortunate to work with really great people, very fortunate," he notes. Many of his colleagues have gone to his home in Puerto Rico to vacation, and he specifically mentions the staff in Home Confinement who help monitor "my guys" and have been an invaluable help.

Fernando has supervised several student interns and looks forward to having another in the fall. His philosophy is to "teach them everything and let them have the full experience of what we do. It shouldn't just be paperwork, filing, etc."

Fernando says one of the greatest challenges of his life has been learning the English language. "I have to try to keep a positive attitude in the struggle," he reflects, noting what a difficult language it is to learn.

"You have to treat everyone like a human being," Fernando says of his clients. "My goal is to get them to become responsible, mature persons so the chances of re-offending go way down. Don't come to my office and tell me how difficult life is. You've got to work for it. They won't sit around playing video games with me," he says. "Too much time means too much opportunity to get into trouble."

Fernando wants his clients to keep busy – with work, school, and family. If not, he says, "I will be your worst nightmare." But if they work at living up to their mandate of being responsible individuals without harming themselves or others, then his efforts truly will have made a difference.



The Intake Service Center has new lettering displaying its official name, The Anthony P. Travisono Intake Service Center. The building was dedicated on April 22nd.

YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS PROGRAM REDUCES VIOLENCE AT MAX

By Michelle Alexandre, Adult Counselor, Maximum Security, RIDOC



Rhode Island has one of the oldest operating men's prisons in the nation. The Maximum Security prison opened in 1878 with a capacity of 252 inmates. Today more than 400 men are housed at Maximum Security. Over the past 100 plus-years of operation many different issues have arisen ranging from flooding and power outages to facility riots. The culture, backgrounds, and crimes of the men incarcerated have changed drastically over the years as well. Today an influx of young men, the majority of whom are serving sentences for gang-related crimes ranging from illegal hand gun possession to murder, has created a new set of challenges for prison staff.

In early 2008, a distinct change in the climate of the inmate population was noticed. Over half of the bookings in the previous year were of a violent nature and being perpetrated or incited by inmates under the age of 25. This subgroup of the inmate population (termed *Youthful Offenders*) was attacking staff and each other with increasing frequency, ganging up on each other with multiple attackers, and increasingly using homemade weapons in these attacks. Most had serious histories of disobedience, fighting, and gang affiliation.

Fights involving the youthful offenders were increasing in frequency and causing general unrest among the overall inmate population at Maximum Security. Once an inmate fight is controlled by Correctional Officers, a facility lock down is imposed until an investigation can be completed. This causes inmates to remain in their cells unable to receive visits, enjoy recreational time, participate in programs, or go to work to earn their monthly wages. Due to the increased violence of the youthful offenders, lock downs were going up in frequency and causing discontent within the prison's general inmate population.

The escalation in fights and lock downs was noticed by many staff members at Maximum Security. One Lieutenant, Carl Burt, took the initiative to run reports focused on violent disciplinary actions. By comparing types and numbers of disciplinary actions from recent months with disciplinary actions from a year ago, he noticed the trend of youthful offenders being the perpetrators of numerous acts of violence against inmates and staff. This issue was brought to the Warden's attention who determined a new type of intervention needed to occur to stop the escalation in violence. Simply giving segregation time for bad behavior wasn't working to change the behavior of the youthful offenders. Once out of the Segregation Unit they continued to cause fights.

A multi-disciplinary board was set up to determine a resolution to the problem of increased violence incited by the younger inmates at Maximum Security. Members of the board included the Assistant Director of Rehabilitative Services, the Warden, and Deputy Warden of Maximum Security, the Clinical Director of Mental Health Services, Mental Health Clinicians, and the Adult Counselors of Maximum Security.

Two goals were established:

1. Decrease violent incidents (short term)
2. Increase the individual coping skills of the youthful offenders so they wouldn't resort to violence to resolve problems (long term)

To accomplish these goals it was necessary to determine what made these inmates different from their counterparts. Those individuals most involved in the fighting were studied, and it was learned that the majority were under 25 years old, had spent most of their adolescent years in the Training School, had ties to gangs, lacked family support, were not involved in programs or educational opportunities, and spent almost all of their time in Segregation.

The *Youthful Offenders Program* (YOP) was created to target these individuals. This program consists of three separate classes: *Self Change*, *Nonviolence*, and *Anger Management/Cognitive Restructuring*. The classes are each 12 weeks long and cover material on nonviolent solutions, conflict resolution, impulse control, cognitive change, and building positive social networks. The entire program lasts between nine and ten months. The selection and enrollment of inmates is handled by the Lieutenants and Adult Counselors at Maximum Security.

One of the challenges in creating this program was recruiting and organizing three separate entities to provide the classes. Following up on their interest in working inside the prisons with young gang members, The Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence was approached by members of the multi-disciplinary board and asked to provide expertise in addressing issues of violence at Maximum Security. They offered to facilitate a 12-week program focused on conflict resolution skills. They also provided a facilitator who had previously served time at Maximum Security. Having a former inmate return to prison to help incarcerated individuals is not a normal practice at the RIDOC and is a revolutionary step for the facility. This facilitator has been able to establish helpful connections with group participants, giving them a positive role model and living proof that if they work the program, a brighter future is possible for them.

Anger Management was already being provided by AdCare Criminal Justice Services, Inc. to all inmates at Maximum Security. This group is run twice a week for 12 weeks. We were able to select individuals to participate in upcoming groups and integrate their program into the *Youthful Offender Program*. *Self Change* is provided by the RIDOC's



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counseling staff and meets once a week for 12 weeks. All the group facilitators and program providers meet once a month to discuss the progress of inmates participating in the program and overall progress of the program. The entire program lasts between nine and ten months. The interviewing of potential candidates for the program, following up with them if they are struggling, and one-on-one counseling is provided by the Adult Counselors at Maximum Security.

The most important difference in the YOP program from other programs at Maximum Security is the participation of inmates confined to the Segregation Unit. The targeted inmates were spending a huge percentage of their sentences in segregation for disruptive behavior. How could we help them if they couldn't leave their cells to attend group? This dilemma was the catalyst for an unprecedented venture at Maximum Security - inmates housed in the Segregation Unit involved in the YOP program were and are allowed to leave their cells, cuffed and shackled, to attend group once a week.

The inmates who were targeted for this program had the reputation for being undisciplined, unruly, and difficult to manage. When approached and offered the opportunity to change by signing up for the YOP program, all 36 said yes. These young inmates all wanted change and most importantly, to be given a chance to change. The fact that they wouldn't be dropped out of the program if they misbehaved impressed them. This may have been the first time in their lives that someone had told them that they wouldn't be forgotten if they made a mistake; instead they would continue to receive help, rehabilitative services, and be able to attend the YOP groups.

The individual programs consist of 12 inmates each for a total of 36 inmates enrolled at a time. The inmates are selected based on their age and disciplinary history. Inmates under the age of 25 with multiple inmate/staff assaults are the target population for these groups/classes. One of the groups takes place in Max's Visiting Room so the participating inmates from the Segregation Unit can attend. Inmates participating in this group are shackled and multiple C.O.'s help to supervise the group (and even participate in the running of the group) when needed.

The implementation of the YOP program has illuminated a lot of important information about the thoughts and struggles of this younger generation of inmates. Some powerful insights into their state of mind and thinking patterns can be seen when reading answers from a simple assignment:

What Do You Believe?

- "I believe that life will never be easy." "I believe I've totally screwed up my life by all of my crimes of dealing drugs and I may never rebound." "I believe every time I do something good in prison the bad always outweighs it."

A focal point of this program is impressing upon the participants that change is possible, support is available, and that their future can be different from their past. While they are enrolled in YOP, they participate in a meeting with the Education Department Social Worker who helps with goal setting, class enrollment, and applying for scholarships. When they are approaching release, a Discharge Planner meets with them and helps to create a comprehensive discharge plan.

These young inmates have been falling through the cracks all their lives. The RIDOC is making every effort to establish a solid foundation of coping skills, cognitive change, and support networks for them. These efforts have already produced positive results; overall disciplines are down and violence against staff and inmates is 10 times lower than prior to the advent of the YOP program. We sincerely hope this trend continues as we work hard everyday to promote positive change at Maximum Security.

THE RIDOC ON CBS'S EARLY MORNING SHOW

On an upcoming fall Sunday (the date is not known at press time) you will be able to tune in to the *Early Morning Show* on CBS and see a segment on **Teny Gross and the Institute for the Study and Practice of Nonviolence**. Part of the piece was filmed in Max and two inmates who participated in the Youthful Offenders program were interviewed.



PRISONER REENTRY UPDATE

At the semiannual Reentry Tier II Committee on September 8th, it was evident that much progress has been made since the Governor became the first in the nation to sign an Executive Order on Corrections Reform and Prisoner Reentry. With a new Governor about to be elected, it seems an appropriate time to take stock of some of the more significant and recent accomplishments.

Tier II has evolved from its original structure and now includes representatives from Regional Reentry Councils located across the state and middle managers from partner agencies both at the state and grassroots level. The group of 25 or so active participants meets twice a year now, but its work is ongoing.

U.S. Attorney Peter Neronha asked Director Wall and Assistant Director Richman if he could attend the September meeting – mostly to listen so that he could become more familiar with the group's work in the event he should be asked an opinion when one of the task groups applies for a Federal grant.

In her introduction to the gathered body, Assistant Director for Rehabilitative Services Roberta Richman said, "We at the DOC have made it very clear that we are working hard to make our end of the work happen so when we send offenders back to the community they are more ready and less of a threat to the public. But it is not our work alone. You (the Tier II members from partner agencies) have absorbed prisoner reentry into your mission."

Guest presentations included an overview of the Statewide Campaign to End Homelessness by **Jim Ryczek** and **Karen Jefferies** of the **Coalition for the Homeless**. They spoke of the 1070 Main Street Collaborative which has four housing-focused non-profits: The Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, the Housing Action Coalition of Rhode Island, and the Housing Network – together under one roof to ensure closer communication and targeted work.

Marlene Roberti of **Day One** spoke to the group about a third grant her organization has received from the Department of Justice that will go toward developing a young adult sex offender management plan. **Michelle Brophy** of the **Corporation for Supportive Housing** talked about the FUSE (Frequent User Service

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Enhancement Program) and how she will ask the Regional Reentry Councils to reach out to more housing authorities about providing vouchers so the 30 or so individuals leaving prison to go into homelessness each month have a greater opportunity to find housing – a key to successful reentry. **Connie Parks** of the **Department of Labor and Training** spoke about



the newly formed Vocational Training Task Force (see page 4) and its recent vendor fair. She noted that she had to turn some vendors away and that they will likely hold another one in the near future. As she was speaking, Director Wall noted that DLT has been an “especially strong partner” in the reentry effort, even placing members of its staff in our institutions on a full-time basis. **Becky Boss** of the **BHDDH** spoke about new and pending grants targeting the offender population. **Sharon Lee**, newly hired Director of Multiple Pathways with the **Rhode Island Department of Education**, spoke about a high school dropout grant for which her agency has applied for 16- to 25-year-olds. **RIDOC Principal Ralph Orleck** was asked to review the grant proposal which

aims to develop a reentry academy targeting incarcerated adults with little education. **Shelley Cortese, Assistant Administrator for Probation & Parole**, spoke about community case management and introduced the Probation & Parole Supervisors present at the meeting. **Carrie Bridges** of the **Department of Health** distributed a brochure on services available to pregnant women in our state and spoke about services for pregnant women within the ACI. **Dr. Michael Fine, Medical Program Director**, spoke about the Transitions Clinic being developed at Rhode Island Hospital to provide continuity of care for released offenders. He spoke of his hope that a similar clinic be established in the future at Crossroads, where he serves on the board. He mentioned the paradigm shift he has initiated since joining the RIDOC several months ago wherein physicians from community health centers will do work within the institutions as well as on the outside. **Teresa Foley, Professional Services Coordinator/Transitional Services** with the RIDOC, spoke about pre-employment training available in all of the RIDOC facilities. She shared that Shop Supervisors in Correctional Industries are on board with providing evaluations to inmates for their work in the shops so they have something concrete to take with them on job interviews on the outside documenting the skills they have acquired inside. **Ken Findlay, Professional Services Coordinator/Institutional Programs** at the RIDOC spoke about assessments and evidence-based programs such as the Level of Response to Traumatic Events (LORTE) model to which the Department has purchased the copyrights and which we are using to develop a curriculum to address the needs of the children of incarcerated adults. He shared that over 2,000 assessments have been completed through the Level of Service Inventory Revised (LSIR) which includes 54 questions addressing 10 components of a person’s life which might cause them to commit crimes as well as a gender responsive “trailer” for women. The staff works to lower the LSIR scores for inmates prior to their leaving and thus reduce their risk to recidivate. He also discussed a new three-phase *Family Focused Initiative* whose goal is to support incarcerated parents, their children, and the families affected by parental incarceration. **Erin Boyar** of the **RIDOC’s Planning & Research Unit** discussed the data information sharing project through which the RIDOC is hoping to share information about offenders with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Data sharing and information exchange was one of the first goals of the reentry effort. **Robin Frye** and **Lynne Corry** (Providence), **Mark Moody** (Pawtucket), and **Cheryl Robinson** (Newport) discussed recent accomplishments of their respective Regional Reentry Councils which include job readiness workshops in Newport, and a Fatherhood Initiative in Pawtucket.

In his closing remarks, Director Wall reflected that our (the RIDOC’s) jurisdiction is people who have caused harm. “The answers to the problems we deal with often lie outside our agency,” he noted. “It is essential that we work together to accomplish our mission.”

about on TV the last several months thanks to the oil spill in the Gulf.”

Asked what he likes most about his current job, Ron says “There is an almost infinite mix of routine tasks, well defined working parameters, and unexpected events that require flexibility.” Ron goes on, “It’s the variability and the element of surprise that makes this an interesting career path.” He also credits the men and women of the RIDOC who exhibit “a solid sense of responsibility, a sometimes quirky sense of humor, and have provided me with a great learning opportunity.” Ron concludes, “I like the people!”

Asked about some of the more interesting experiences he has had on the job, Ron recalls that he was tasked with extricating a sea gull from the ribbon wire his first week on the job. On a more serious note, his most positive experiences have been shared projects where there has been a team effort to define the issues or concerns and then participate in working toward a solution. His work has enabled him to interact with employees at every level within the Department.

Ron is a graduate of the University of Rhode Island, where he earned his Bachelor’s degree in Biology. He attends a continuing education program at the Harvard School of Public Health and has gone to numerous seminars and trainings over the years.

Asked if he has any “off the clock” hobbies, Ron shares that he has a large woodworking bench saw in his basement where he likes to “transform big planks of wood into sawdust.” He jokes, “The mantra in my home is ‘Don’t quit your day job.’”

As a child growing up not far from the Pastore Complex, Ron recalls pedaling his bicycle around the ACI and former MHRH (now called the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals). He reflects, “Like so many of us, my career path followed several twists and turns. So to return to a childhood ‘stomping ground’ has been an unexpected but personally fulfilling experience.”